

Old Academy  
Main Street near Huttleston Avenue  
(Formerly located on Main Street at Huttleston Avenue)  
Fairhaven  
Bristol County  
Massachusetts

HABS No. MASS-690

HABS  
MASS  
3-FAIR  
12-

PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Eastern Office, Division of Design and Construction  
143 South Third Street  
Philadelphia 6, Pennsylvania

## OLD ACADEMY

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MASS  
3-FAIR  
12-

Address: Main Street near Huttleston Avenue, Fairhaven,  
Bristol County, Massachusetts.

(Formerly located on Main Street at Huttleston  
Avenue)

Present Owner: Town of Fairhaven, Massachusetts

Present Occupant: Unoccupied, in the normal sense of the word.

Present Use: Preserved as an historical monument--not regularly  
open to the public, but visible by request.

Brief Statement  
of Significance: A late eighteenth century school building represent-  
ing the customs of that period, with interesting  
architectural features.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

## A. Physical History

1. Original and subsequent owners: A group of citizens built this academy; it is now in the possession of the Town of Fairhaven. [Society of Architectural Historians, (New Bedford, Massachusetts, August 17-20, 1961), page 13.]
2. Date of erection: 1798 [ibid.]
3. Original plans: A central hall with a room on each side, on the main floor. The second floor may or may not have been similar.
4. Notes on alterations and additions: The right-hand room of the main floor appears to be preserved, or perhaps restored, in an early form. The left-hand room has had a thin partition inserted in modern times. It appears probable that the second floor underwent alterations, the nature of which are not clear. [observation, and interview with Mrs. F. H. Brown, 7 Oxford Street, Fairhaven, Massachusetts.]

About 1906 the building was moved from its former site--now a dividing strip in a public highway--to the present one. It is said to have been moved intact. [Society of Architectural Historians, 1961.]

- B. Historical Events Connected with the Structure: This school was an important part of the culture of the community for many years.
- C. Likely Sources Not Yet Investigated: The public records of Fairhaven may have information about this structure.

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### A. General Statement

1. Architectural character: An early four-room school building with a frontispiece entrance and bell tower; in spite of alterations inside, a typical classroom is preserved.
2. Condition of fabric: Generally good.

### B. Technical Description of Exterior

1. Overall dimensions: Rectangular, 50'-10" long (five bays) by 24'-10 1/2" deep, with a projecting tower on the rear 8'-11" wide by 7'-5" in depth. It now faces south, and is two stories high.
2. Foundations: Granite; low. Apparently constructed about 1906, when the building was moved to the present location.
3. Wall construction: Heavy timber frame, sheathed and shingled. The tower has 6" x 7" corner posts, a 6" x 8" girt, 3" x 4" studs, and wide sheathing boards of random width. Corners are braced. Gables at the ends are covered with flush boarding.
4. Chimneys: One at the center of each end, of brick.
5. Openings:
  - a. Doorway and door: A frontispiece entrance at the center of the front wall, with semicircular fan-light extending into the pediment. There is a Roman Doric pilaster at each side, with a mutular broken entablature. The door is divided, with three panels in each leaf.
  - b. Windows and shutters: Double hung sash, 12 lights over 12 lights, simple trim, louvred shutters.
6. Roof:
  - a. Shape, covering: Gable roof, now covered with asphalt composition shingles.

- b. Cornice: Box cornice with crown and bed mouldings; pediments at gable ends.
- c. Dormers, cupola: There are no dormers. The tower is surmounted by a belfry (now empty--the bell is displayed at the foot of the stairway).

### C. Technical Description of Interior

1. Floor plans: Central entrance and hall, with one classroom at either side (the one on the left now divided by a very light modern partition). The tower projection continues the hall toward the rear, and contains a stairway of U-shape, with three short flights.

Second floor has one smaller room, at the left end, and a larger room over the hall and right end; this may or may not have been the original layout.

2. Stairways: Main stair is mostly enclosed. Above it a small stairway leads to upper part of tower.
3. Flooring: In right-hand classroom on first floor are preserved very wide floor boards, up to 20". These appear original. The floor of this room is terraced to elevate the successive rows of desks. On the second floor are some wide boards, but most of the flooring appears to be old replacements, of various times. Some wrought nails are visible.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Plaster on wood lath. Large room on second floor has a coved ceiling--some indications that this may have been an alteration.
5. Doorways and doors: One original six-panel door between hall and right-hand classroom on first floor; four-panel doors on second floor.
6. Trim: Simple moulded trim at doors and windows. Wainscoting of horizontal boards. Baseboard with mouldings. Peg strips in classroom. Corner posts are cased.
7. Hardware: Entrance door preserves old wrought iron bolts at top and bottom. Thumb latch on a second floor door.
8. Lighting: No indication of old fixtures.
9. Heating: Originally by four fireplaces, some now blocked up. There is a sheet metal fire frame of undetermined date in the small second story room. The typical classroom on the first floor contains a stove. Modern central

heating from a furnace has been added. It is said that when the building was moved in 1906, the fireplaces and chimneys were kept intact.

D. Site

The building is now located on the grounds of the Fairhaven High School, surrounded by a lawn. The former site has been altered greatly by modern highway construction.

Prepared by Harley J. McKee, Architect  
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